

APPROVED
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY BOARD (EDAB)
MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
WEDNESDAY JUNE 8, 2016 – 3:45 P.M.

Board Members		Attendance – January thru December	
		Present	Absent
Jason Crush, Chair	A	5	1
Cary Goldberg, Vice Chair	P	4	2
Nikki Austin	A	4	2
Gary Farmer	A	2	4
Christopher “Kit” Denison	P	5	1
Jason Hughes	P	6	0
Cort Neimark	A	4	2
Keith Costello	P	4	2
Steven Buckingham	P	5	1
Pj Espinal	P	5	1
Dustin Robinson	P	3	0

At this time, there are 11 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 would constitute a quorum.

Staff

Michael Chen, City Liaison, Economic & Business Development Manager
Lutecia Florencio, Economic Development Aide
Mona Laventure, Prototype, Inc.

Presenters and Guests

I. Call to Order & Determination of Quorum

Vice Chair Goldberg called the meeting to order at 3:52 p.m. A quorum was present.

II. Approval of May 11, 2016, Minutes

Motion made by Mr. Costello, seconded by Mr. Buckingham, to approve the minutes of the May 11, 2016, meeting. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

III. Staff Updates

Mr. Chen directed the Board's attention to documents pertaining to the building permit activity. He said they graphed out the month-to-month activity, but thought it was confusing.

Mr. Denison mentioned that some people he has spoken with think the Department is falling behind in the permitting process, and Mr. Chen responded that the Department has a high priority finding staff. He added it is challenging to find a plan reviewer because they have to be qualified under the South Florida Building Code. They have filled a Deputy Manager's position to assist in improving the review process.

Mr. Denison had also heard that Fort Lauderdale's pay was not competitive. Mr. Chen stated they have done a compensation survey, and the City recognizes the pay disparity. They are providing supplemental pay to qualified individuals.

Mr. Chen advised that Human Resources has staff in the Department so they can focus on their needs.

Ms. Espinal suggested informing people of the mistakes they are making on their applications when they drop them off.

Mr. Costello announce an upcoming on the subject of City of Fort Lauderdale Building Department issues. The Assistant City Manager will be there.

Concern was expressed about the possibility of the area suffering from a tropical storm or hurricane with all the issues in the Department. Vice Chair Goldberg said the good news was the high demand for new projects. He wondered if somehow the Department could allocate some funds to assist people in the certification process for plan reviewer.

Vice Chair Goldberg stated they would like someone from the Building Department to address the Board about the issue because it affects the economic activity in the City.

Vice Chair Goldberg shared information he had heard about Boca Raton's aggressive economic development activities, which could have a negative impact on Fort Lauderdale's Cypress Creek area.

IV. Presentations

A. Charles Webster, MBA Coordinator, Legislative Affairs-Broward County Public Affairs

Mr. Webster offered to return at another time and show a presentation on the schools' technology classes.

Mr. Webster mentioned that the Broward County School District was the first fully accredited school system in Florida and described the rigors of the process.

Mr. Webster began a PowerPoint presentation on the Broward School District, highlighting the population served, languages spoken (118), employees, grants and programs, volunteers, energy usage, and meals served.

He distributed a handout on the general obligation bond and detailed the projects involved. Mr. Webster reported that an RFP had been sent out for the design build for Stranahan High School. There were issues with the bids, so lawyers advised them to start over. The bids went out again as a Request for Qualifications; and the bids will go to a review committee on June 22, 2016.

Mr. Webster described the technology program, which was outlined on the reverse of the handout. He said one of the goals is to help develop a workforce that will support the economic goals of the City.

Mr. Webster returned to his PowerPoint presentation, highlighting the Fort Lauderdale schools, including the elementary schools and adult education programs, Dillard, Fort Lauderdale High School, Stranahan High School, and the middle schools. He mentioned that chess and debate are featured in the curriculum at different schools. Students at middle schools can start preparing for Microsoft certifications, which they can get by the time they graduate from high school.

Mr. Webster also distributed two handouts on magnet and computer technical programs. They are partnering with CODE.org to increase access to computer science courses and resources. There are 11,500 BCPS students participating in the program.

There was a brief discussion on how to reach out to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for technology grants and computer systems for students.

Mr. Hughes wondered how the graduation rate for Broward County Schools compares to other school districts. Mr. Webster replied it is in the 60th percentile and is moving up slowly.

Mr. Hughes also asked Mr. Webster what he would tell people considering moving here about the school system. Mr. Webster commented that he would advise people to visit the schools and see for themselves.

Vice Chair Goldberg remarked there should be a synergy between the schools and the economic development group, since economic development is driven by the available education. Mr. Webster said they will be doing more of that. He said they need more opportunities for internships.

Ms. Espinal wondered how they advertise the magnet programs and how Fort Lauderdale got to be rated as a "C" school in the City reviews websites. Mr. Webster did not know, because Fort Lauderdale High is an "A" school and is winning national awards.

Mr. Buckingham stated that in the annual “neighbor survey,” the satisfaction with the public schools in Fort Lauderdale is rated very poorly. He emphasized that the perception of the schools is not in line with reality. It is critical to get the word out so that companies looking to come here will be able to attract employees who want their children to attend quality public schools. He added that perception of the private school system is going up every year in contrast to that of the public school system.

Vice Chair Goldberg mentioned that Pinecrest (a private school) advertises where their graduates are going to college, and he suggested that the public schools could do the same. Mr. Webster said they did a similar campaign years ago in connection with Ivy League colleges, but they have to more consistent. They have an annual pull-out section in the *Sun Sentinel* done by the Alliance and Broward College. Mr. Denison urged reaching out in social media and the internet and utilizing SEO (search engine optimization).

Vice Chair Goldberg asked Mr. Webster for the percentage of students who are going on to higher education, and he said he would check on it. The new policy that Governor Rick Scott has talked about that will open up the districts will happen next year. Mr. Webster said they have empty seats and may actively recruit from other areas. Regarding marketing, he advised that any extra funds typically go into the classroom instead of into marketing. It was suggested that marketing positions might be funded through a public/private partnership, or through Chamber contacts, etc.

Ms. Espinal suggested that Mr. Webster could talk about the upgrading of electric and technology in the schools as part of his “elevator speech.”

V. Old Business

A. City of Fort Lauderdale, Economic & Community Investment Division, revised/updated Economic Development Action Framework

Mr. Chen said he had nothing to add; they are waiting for comments and feedback.

Mr. Costello asked about the plan, and Mr. Chen reviewed the information for him, since he had missed a few meetings. Mr. Chen added they are working on updating the City’s website within the context of economic development. He also mentioned he is drafting the section on the website about the schools.

VI. New Business – None

It was noted the next meeting will be in August, and Mr. Chen hoped to have the Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood International Airport give a presentation.

Motion made by Mr. Denison, seconded by Mr. Hughes, to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 p.m.

Attachments:

Economic Development Advisory Board
June 8, 2016

PowerPoint presentation on the Broward Schools – Mr. Webster
Handout on the General Obligation Bond – Mr. Webster
Handouts on the magnet programs and C-Tech – Mr. Webster
Documents on building permit activity – Mr. Chen

[Minutes transcribed by Judy Rubin, Prototype, Inc.]